Adolescent Pregnancy

In 2010, Washington teens age 15-17 years of age had 2,913 pregnancies (live births, abortions and fetal deaths). This equates to a rate of 22 pregnancies per 1,000 youth ages 15-17 years. This is a decrease of eight percent from the 2009 rate of 24. Washington's rate of 22 is higher than the National rate of 17.3 for this age group.

Washington counties with a rate of over 40 pregnancies per 1,000 include: Adams (56.7), Asotin (44.6), Franklin (45.9), Grays Harbor (41.3), Wahkiakum (50), and Yakima (44).are significantly higher than the state rate. These counties include: Adams (73), Yakima (54.2), Franklin (51.8), and Grant (50.5).

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, teen pregnancy and childbearing bring substantial social and economic costs through immediate and long-term impacts on teen parents and their children.

- Teen pregnancy accounts for nearly $11 billion per year in costs to U.S. taxpayers for increased health care and foster care, increased incarceration rates among children of teen parents, and lost tax revenue because of lower educational attainment and income among teen mothers.
- Pregnancy and birth are significant contributors to high school dropout rates among girls. Only about 50% of teen mothers receive a high school diploma by 22 years of age, versus approximately 90% of women who had not given birth during adolescence.
- The children of teenage mothers are more likely to have lower school achievement and drop out of high school, have more health problems, be incarcerated at some time during adolescence, give birth as a teenager, and face unemployment as a young adult.

These effects remain for the teen mother and her child even after adjusting for those factors that increased the teenager's risk for pregnancy; such as, growing up in poverty, having parents with low levels of education, growing up in a single-parent family, and having low attachment to and performance in school

Programs that appear to make a difference in reducing teenage pregnancy include: early childhood education, nurse home-visiting, school-based curricula, abstinence and contraceptive programs, and activities that enhance life options for adolescent girls.